

**School Health Advisory Committee DRAFT Meeting Minutes
August 19, 2021**

***SHAC Members will participate virtually due to the COVID-19 Emergency**

Members of the public are welcome to attend virtually at <https://www.fcps.edu/streamingmeeting>. Fairfax County and City residents may make public comment by submitting a video or audio testimony by email to lmskurpski@fcps.edu prior to scheduled meeting.

Members in Attendance:

P	Avarez, Maria Cecilia* (PYM)	P	Jacobs, Lori*	A	Reynolds, Carrie	A	Strum, Judy* (PSBA)
A	Bartus, Camille	P	Kaubaroulis, Danielle*	A	Shahlaee, Amir* (PYM)	P	Thompson, Joe* (PSBA)
P	Boyd, Michelle			P	Silvia-Torma, Brenda*	A	Trouton, Lorraine* (PSBA)
P	Danner, Kara* (PSBA)	A	Lyon, Libby	A	Skurpski, Lea	A	Vaccarello, Tom
A	Daugherty, Karim* (PSBA)			P	Smith, Ann* (PSBA)		
P	Demers, Bethany	P	Nachami Sherry* (PSBA)	P	Spanier, Holly*	P	Wallin, Robin* (PSBA)
A	Elhady, Merehan*			P	Spivack, Beth*	A	Whiting, David
P	Glenn, Adriana*	P	Payne, Phyllis* (PSBA)			P	Wilkie, Ann*

P=Present A=Absent * = Voting Member PSBA = Pending School Board Approval PYM = Previous Year Member

1. **Call to Order:** 7:07 pm

2. **Introduction:** by Phyllis Payne

3. FCPS Updates:

Dr. Boyd described the layered prevention strategies FCPS has in place, which now include assigned seating at lunchtime.

4. Presentation by Brenda Silvia-Torma:

- a. Review of Delta variant: Identified in Spring, became the dominant strain in the Summer.
- b. Brenda and Phyllis commend FCPS for its excellent work in preventing transmission during Spring 2021 when half of FCPS students returned to school and for its continued efforts to build and implement layered preventive strategies to mitigate transmission of COVID. Brenda recognized the tremendous planning efforts that it took to safely bring back students in Spring 2021 and the effort it is to bring 99.5% of students back into buildings. They appreciate the hard work that FCPS administrators and staff are doing to have this school year be as safe and successful as possible.
- c. Because masks have become a trusted layer of protection and students must remove them to eat, community members are interested in providing other protections, such as physical distance and/or outdoor space and time. The purpose of this emergency meeting is to discuss ways to ensure students and staff (and parents) feel safe about mealtime during school.
- d. Some parents have expressed concern about lunchtime when students must remove their masks to eat. School administration is hearing great concern about elementary lunch in particular. We understand that students will not be required to all face one direction in cafeteria as they did in Spring 2021. Outdoor spaces are encouraged but may not be used.

Updated 9.15.2021
Revised 10.17.2021

- e. Ability to implement social distancing during class time and lunch varies by school, based on size of cafeterias and students and number of lunches being served.
 - f. SHAC members are guided by evidence-based public health research in making decisions regarding school health. Two resources that SHAC reviewed were
 - [US Department of Education's ED COVID-19 Handbook: Strategies for Safely Reopening Elementary and Secondary Schools](#) and
 - [VA Department of Health's Interim Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in VA PreK-12 Schools](#).
 - g. These two guidance documents recommend maintaining 6 feet of distance during mealtimes moving mealtimes outside when safe and feasible.
 - h. Example Strategies from FCPS schools:
 - Use outdoor space for lunch and classroom
 - Set individual desks in cafeteria in a pattern that allows for good air flow and 6 feet of space between people. Everyone will sit in the same direction.
 - Allow students to eat in cohorts in their classrooms.
 - i. Brief Review of Arlington County Public School Strategies
5. **Discussion/Brainstorming Session:** Goal to identify and discuss ideas to address the concerns about a return to normal lunchtime operations.

A. Use Outdoor Space:

- Tents are being installed.
- Rotate classes outdoors to reduce the number of students concurrently in the cafeteria
- Use pool noodles to establish distance
- Tent sides can be put down at night to protect desks.
- Use parent volunteers, ask if bus drivers would extend their hours to include mid-day
- Discussion of whether volunteers could help supervise lunch. Schools may not be permitting any parent volunteers right now to limit outsiders in the building. Volunteers might not be vaccinated.
- Suggested community volunteers include Fairfax County's Medical Reserve Corp (MRC) and Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)
- Children may feel more comfortable and less anxious if permitted to eat outside.
- Grab and go lunches

B. Challenges raised during the discussion included:

- Staffing for lunchtime if children are in smaller groups
- Teachers need an unencumbered lunch break
- Not enough transition time to move students to the outdoor location.
- Uncomfortable weather--What are the weather conditions that would be appropriate for outdoor lunch?
- Too late to make a change right now. Teachers and administrative staff have been planning for months.

C. Eat in Classrooms:

- Greatest concern is for elementary schools.
- Teachers and aides would have to staff this.
- Storytime while elementary students eating to discourage talking without masks
- If 6 feet of space not available, have half eat and then the other half in classroom and half in lunchroom
- Bagged lunches –grab and go

D. Other measures to reduce the number of students eating together in the cafeteria

- Allow parents to eat with their children outside so that there is a reduced number of children inside the cafeteria.
- Allow high school students to check out for lunch and check back in
- Spread the lunch hours over an even longer period of time

E. Concerns included:

- High school vaccinations rates may vary by school
- Rule compliance may vary also
- Anxiety levels rising amongst adults and kids
- Children look to adults for leadership
- Have a support plan for kids who are anxious about eating indoors around large groups of students. Suggested idea included allowing students to eat in a room with a limited number of students to ensure 6 feet of space between children. Will some students refuse to eat because of fear of removing their mask?

F. Comments included:

- Staff health. Principals have tried to minimize food-related staff meetings, or limited to “grab and go”. These habits are good models for kids. Principals ARE trying to limit large gatherings and food related large gatherings in general.
- Kids are safer in school. We must learn to live with COVID-19 and all of the variants. School is for learning, including learning to live with COVID, to deal with the anxiety of COVID. Kids are desperate to come to school and that is why there are following the COVID rules. CDC says to follow the distancing rules as close as “practicable”
 - Low child to child transmission
 - Low child to adult transmission
 - Higher adult to adult transmission

Motion: Holly Spanier made a motion, Brenda seconded the motion. All voting members present approved the following motion:

SHAC is concerned about the increased risk of COVID spread to our most vulnerable students during cafeteria time if students are seated in pre-pandemic spacing.

1. **Utilize outdoor space as a first choice to alleviate indoor capacity in the cafeteria.** COVID-19 transmission is much lower outside.
2. **Aim for 25% reduction of student body in the cafeteria** by utilizing alternative spaces.
3. **Maximize distance** between people when eating indoors.

Adjournment: 9:32 pm

Meeting Handouts: Memo and Power point presentation, including draft motion

Meeting Notes Drafted by: Lori Jacobs